



Perspectives

NEWS AND ISSUES FROM AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS, CHICAGO

JAN - MAR 2004

AF remains focused on priorities

Editor's note: The events of the past year offered an opportunity to demonstrate the contributions of the world's finest air and space force to the joint and coalition effort to defend our nation and friends. As we adapt to a new era, we will continue to leverage those capabilities that deliver military advantages. Whether focused on strike, space, mobility, support, or special operations, Air Force Airmen remain focused on the following priorities for 2004:

Sustain our Warfighting Readiness and Expeditionary Focus

At the height of Operation Iraqi Freedom, nearly 55,000 Airmen were deployed. Our engineers, maintainers, and logisticians sustained nearly 900 aircraft at 38 new or improved expeditionary bases. Our communications professionals established bandwidth capability eight times larger than we had in Operation Enduring Freedom. And our work continues, at home in Operation Noble Eagle, in our stateside operational and training missions, and around the globe, with more than 23,000 Airmen and over 300 aircraft deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans, and elsewhere. Our mobility team is swapping out 240,000 people from the combat zone; our base defenders are conducting convoys and security patrols outside the wire; our medics are treating combat casualties. In short, we remain at war, and we will continue to take the fight to the enemy. Every Airman must be ready — fit and trained when called to serve.

Expand our Contributions to the Joint Fight

This priority underscores the rationale behind our integration efforts — we are all on the joint team, and our Air Force exists to produce battlefield effects. Our future is closely tied to the future of our

land forces. It is important that our land forces continue to see us demonstrate our obvious commitment to air-to-ground support. We will be fully integrated with them, whether they are Army, Marines, special operations forces, or coalition forces. As we modernize, we are also committed to delivering operational space support to the combatant commanders, expanding our sensing portfolio and global mobility capabilities, reorganizing our Numbered Air Forces to enable a total focus on warfighting planning and execution, and preserving a rapid, persistent long range strike capability.

Increase our Focus on Special Operations

Special Operations in our Air Force is not a peripheral capability. We need to provide our Airmen with the advanced systems they need to continue their transformation into a single community of warfighting specialization. We intend to bring together our Battlefield Airmen — combat controllers, pararescuemen, combat weather, Tactical Air Control Party Airmen, and others — under a common training and organizational structure to strengthen the combat power they bring to the fight. Plus, we will realistically modernize our Special Operations aircraft and systems, starting with our helicopter force, and continuing with the tools essential to link air and ground capabilities.



F/A-22 Raptor

Protect our Airmen

The threat of terrorism is real, it is persistent, and it is aimed at us. Yet, recent history has shown that terrorists prefer to attack soft, weak, or unprotected targets. Thus, we cannot let our guard down for a moment. Every Airman must be a sensor, and we must, at all times, ensure that our bases and facilities are hard targets. In addition to protecting our force, we must preserve our force. The Air Force is urging its members to place a renewed focus on caring for each other, engaging early and often with those around them to prevent accidents before they occur.

America and her allies liberated two nations, and achieved significant objectives in the war on terrorism. With these priorities, and a sustained commitment to our core values of integrity, service, and excellence, we'll sustain our position as the world's premier air and space power.



Editorial Staff

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Mr. Jim Brewer
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(SAF/PANC)

**Master Sgt.
Ellen Schirmer**
Editor

U.S. Air Force
Perspectives
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For more information
regarding anything in
this publication, or the
Air Force in general,
please call

SAF/PANC at
(312) 353-8300;

SAF/PANE at
(310) 235-7511;

or SAF/PANM at
(212) 784-0147.

You may contact the
editor at 200 W.
Adams, Ste 1440,
Chicago, IL 60606, or
send e-mail to
ellen.schirmer@afnews.af.mil.

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Shaping the Force

by Gen. John Jumper
Air Force chief of staff

Over the last decade, we've seen a dramatic change in our security environment. We reduced our active duty force by nearly 40 percent — from 608,000 to 375,000 — while remaining engaged around the world at levels higher than at any time during the Cold War. To accommodate the changing world, we have completely transformed our Air Force, from one that dealt with the Soviet and North Korean threats into an agile Air Expeditionary Force, capable of rapidly responding anywhere, with tailored forces ready to deal with any contingency. Our transformation has yielded outstanding results.

But, for the past two years, we have exceeded our mandated active duty end strength of 359,000. Under the President's declaration of a national emergency, our excess

numbers are appropriate. While this is a temporary situation fueled by the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), we now need a plan to return to the authorized levels. By the end of 2005, we should reduce the size of our active force by 16,000 people, and we must reshape the force to correct existing skill imbalances and account for a new range of missions in the GWOT.

I know it may not be clear why our active duty end strength needs to decrease while we are still heavily engaged around the world. Let me explain how we got to this point and what we are doing to fix it.

As a result of several years of high operations tempo, we were given some latitude on how quickly we came down to the legal end strength limit of 359,000. We

also suffered an unprecedented recruiting problem during the 1990s. Recruiting has traditionally not been a problem for the Air Force, but a robust economy late in the 1990s had us falling short of recruiting goals for the first time since 1979. As a result, we took in thousands of people using skill mix assumptions that are no longer applicable to the demands of the GWOT. We now have several career fields over-manned, while suffering shortages in others. Our task now is to reduce the force while also fixing this skill mix imbalance.

Perhaps the most significant factor affecting our strength was, and still is, retention. Our goal for first term-enlisted retention is 55 percent, but, at the end of fiscal 2003, it was 61 percent. We are proud of our retention rates and that our people are electing to continue to serve.

To start our reshaping effort, we have set new targets for recruiting, from 37,000 this year to 35,600 in fiscal 2005 and 34,500 in fiscal 2006. We are also working on fixing our stressed career fields. Where we are short of people for the rotational requirement, we've

taken action to direct more of our recruits into the stressed career fields. However, we know we can't replace our experienced folks with people right out of technical school. Part of our force shaping will have to be done by retraining and shifting experienced people from over-staffed career fields.

In addition to looking at retention, recruiting, and retraining, we are also looking at where our people are — we have Airmen serving in jobs outside the Air Force who don't deploy as part of our AEF. Some of these, such as joint positions and some defense agency positions, require uniformed people, and we benefit by having an Airman's perspective in those jobs. Others, however, may not require a military person at all. These are positions that we are working to legitimately reclaim into our ranks.

All of these efforts will be combined with several

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“ We are out of balance for the contingency world in which we live. By the end of 2005, we should reduce the size of our active force by 16,000 people ... ”

People - our greatest asset

Top enlisted AF leader takes issues to the Hill

by Staff Sgt. Melanie Streeter
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — The service's ranking enlisted member recently addressed quality-of-life issues to the House subcommittee on military construction.

Overall, quality of life in the Air Force has greatly improved, contributing to increased morale and retention, said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force [Gerald R. Murray](#). However, that quality of life is not the biggest contributing factor.

"Today (morale) is the best I've ever seen it," Chief Murray said. "It is not (based on) leisure or comfort. It is ... based on commitment and dedication to a cause that is much greater than any individual, and they do believe in what they are doing."

But there are still some areas of concern. Among them are veteran's education benefits, infrastructure improvements, deployment schedules and the Air Force's need to trim down its end-strength by more than 16,000.

The issue with veteran's education benefits is fast becoming a pressing issue for those approaching retirement.

"There are 42,000 Airmen who have no opportunity for veteran's benefits," the chief said. "The group hit the hardest are those retiring now, or who will be in the next few years who declined to enroll in the Veteran's Education Assistance Program offered from 1977 to 1985."

These senior noncommissioned officers served during a time of increased operations tempo, from operations Desert Storm to Iraqi Freedom.

"They now find themselves leaving military service without the opportunity to complete the college degrees that duty to their country often kept them from obtaining," Chief Murray said.

Besides the inequity of benefits, the Air Force is facing growing deficiencies in infrastructure, Chief Murray said.

"Deteriorated airfields, hangars, waterlines and electrical networks are just some of the infrastructure elements warranting immediate attention," he said.

Many airfields and hangars date back to the days of the Army Air Corps, said the chief. Some maintainers work in hangars where the conditions are not much better than working outside.

"It's imperative that we address these needs and give our Airmen first-class facilities to perform their jobs at peak efficiency," he said.

With the current deployment situation, Airmen are tasked



WASHINGTON — Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Gerald R. Murray answered questions during a congressional hearing Feb. 25 about quality-of-life issues in the military. Chief Murray said morale today is the best he has seen it. (Photo by Master Sgt. Gary R. Coppage)

to perform those jobs efficiently around the world.

"At the height of Operation Iraqi Freedom, more than 40,000 of our Airmen deployed to 36 locations around the world," Chief Murray said. "Today that number totals more than 20,000, including Guard and Reserve forces and even some of our civilians."

While the majority of Airmen are organized into Air Expeditionary Forces, deploying on a 90-day, 15-month cycle, that cycle was suspended to meet the requirements of OIF. Many Airmen were deployed for indefinite amounts of time.

"We're now returning the majority of our force back into a standard AEF rotation," Chief Murray said.

Airmen are getting really used to deployments, with nearly two-thirds of the force having deployed, many more than once.

"I recently spoke to a 13-year technical sergeant in our Air Force," the chief said. "In 13 years, he has deployed on 13 extended deployments. I asked him how he felt about this. He said, 'Chief, it's what we do.'"

"It is indeed what we do today," he said. "Because of that, I am asking for your continued support on the issues and programs important to our young men and women and their families."

The chief also touched on retention and recruiting, housing improvements and policy changes, the renewed emphasis on physical fitness, and the contributions of Guard and Reserve forces.

Editor's Note: The full text of Chief Murray's testimony to the House subcommittee on military construction can be found [here](#).

A look ahead at America's space program

WASHINGTON - The executive agent for space testified before the House Armed Services Committee subcommittee on strategic forces recently on the status of America's space program.

Undersecretary of the Air Force [Peter B. Teets](#), who is also the director of the National Reconnaissance Office, told committee members that he had five priorities for the national space effort in 2004.

"These priorities have shaped the fiscal 2005 budget for our space programs and I see substantial improvements in capabilities in every mission area as we re-capitalize our space assets in the years ahead," Mr. Teets told committee members. "The funding requested in the president's budget allows us to evolve capabilities ... while planned investments in new systems will provide significant increases in performance, supporting the full range of intelligence and military operations to include the global war on terrorism."

The U.S. is pursuing two major initiatives as part of its space program, Mr. Teets told committee members. The first is the transformational communications architecture, which will be made possible by the Transformational Communications Satellite.

Mr. Teets said that satellite will greatly improve the level of communications experienced by warfighters on the ground.

"The TSAT will be a revolutionary change in satellite communications for the warfighter and for national intelligence users," Mr. Teets said. "It allows our fighting forces to have near real-time intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance at their fingertips and provides unprecedented connectivity with Internet-like capability that extends the global information grid to deployed and mobile users worldwide."

Mr. Teets said he expects the first satellite to be launched in 2011.

The second major initiative of the U.S. space program is development of space-based radar. The SBR program will provide persistent surveillance, on demand. That means the ability to see nearly anywhere on Earth, at any time day or night, through clouds or sand storms, Mr. Teets said.

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additional force-shaping tools to get to our authorized manpower levels and to get the right skills in the right places.

We are out of balance for the contingency world in which we live. I recently returned from (an overseas location) where I met people who had been deployed for more than 200 days. They take great pride in the job they are doing, but we are being unfair to them and their families. If at all possible, our goal is to give every qualified Airman who wants to stay in the Air Force the opportunity to do so. In

National Space Effort 2004 priorities

- **Achieving mission success in operations and acquisition**
- **Developing and maintaining a team of space professionals**
- **Integrating space capabilities for national intelligence and warfighting**
- **Producing solutions for challenging national security problems**
- **Ensuring freedom of action in space**

To learn more about the U.S. Air Force's space capabilities and systems, visit the Air Force Space Command website [here](#).

"Since radar has the unique capability of being able to see through clouds, to be able to image or do surface moving target indications at night, you can see the effects that you can achieve by having some persistence in your surveillance activities," Mr. Teets said. "That is the big driving factor behind the desire to have a SBR capability."

Also discussed during the testimony was the development and implementation of a new space systems acquisition program, now under Air Force Space Command, and the status of the space-based infrared system. The SBIRS is designed to be a follow on to the defense support program, a series of satellites used to detect strategic missile attacks.

addition, we will use every tool to shape the force we have available to avoid the extreme measures that were used in the early 1990s.

Saddam Hussein buried his airplanes in the sand rather than face your Air Force. That's respect. We will continue to remain closely engaged on these issues to ensure that we reshape the force into one that is suited for the 21st century while sustaining the standards of excellence and morale that are emblematic of the world's greatest Air Force.